

**BY:** Senator PARKER

**MOURNING** the untimely death of James Mtume,  
renowned jazz and R&B musician and civil rights  
advocate

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and pay tribute to those musical geniuses whose commitment and creative talents have contributed to the entertainment and cultural enrichment of their community and the entire State of New York; and

**WHEREAS,** This Legislative Body is moved this day to memorialize the inspired life and career of James Mtume, who died on Sunday, January 9, 2022, at the age of 76; and

**WHEREAS,** James Mtume was born James Forman in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on January 3, 1946; and

**WHEREAS,** As a young boy, James Mtume was constantly surrounded by successful jazz and R&B artists due to his father and stepfather being prospering musicians themselves; and

**WHEREAS,** The musician received his new last name "Mtume" after joining a branch of the Black Power Movement; the name means messenger or prophet in Swahili; and

**WHEREAS,** James Mtume pioneered a new pathway in music by creating his own style which he referred to as "Sophistifunk," combining sounds from jazz, soul, and funk music to create something wholly unique; and

**WHEREAS,** In the 1980s, James Mtume formed an R&B group called "Mtume" which produced five best-selling albums and 11 top hits; and

**WHEREAS,** Throughout his career, Mtume collaborated with several jazz giants, including Duke Ellington, McCoy Tyner, Freddie Hubbard and Sonny Rollins; he also toured with Miles Davis for five years; and

**WHEREAS,** Featuring Tawatha Agee on lead vocals, the band's salacious 1982 song "Juicy Fruit" became a much-sampled tune, being used as the basis for at least 70 songs, most notably by The Notorious B.I.G. on his debut solo single, "Juicy," as well as by Faith Evans for "Faithfully," Keyshia Cole on her single "Let It Go" and Tamar Braxton on her hit single "The One"; and

**WHEREAS,** Mtume also scored soundtracks for films, like 1986's "Native Son," and served as music supervisor for the 1994 Fox cop drama "New York Undercover"; he also co-hosted the community talk series "Open Line," formerly on New York City's WBLS FM station, for 18 years; and

**WHEREAS,** James Mtume is survived by his beloved wife, Kamili Mtume; a brother, Jeffrey Forman; two sons, Faulu Mtume and Richard Johnson; four daughters, Benin Mtume, Eshe King, Ife Mtume and Sanda Lee; and six

grandchildren Sukari Mtume, Yamani Mtume, Craig McCargo, Mazi Mtume, Aya Mtume and Jhasi Mtume; and

**WHEREAS,** James Mtume's dedication to his music leaves an indelible legacy of inspiration which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to his family, friends and countless fans; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the untimely death of James Mtume, and to express its deepest condolences to his family; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of James Mtume.